

THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Sanford Quest, master criminologist of the world, finds that in bringing to justice MacDougal, the murderer of the Ashleighs, he has but just begun a life-and-death struggle with a mysterious master criminal who is bent on the annihilation of the Ashleighs. In his room, Quest has a half monkey, half man, destroyed by fire. In his room have appeared a half monkey, half man, destroyed by fire. In his room have appeared a half monkey, half man, destroyed by fire.

SEVENTH INSTALLMENT. THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOMETHING in the nature of a conference was proceeding in Quest's study. The professor was there, seated in the most comfortable easy chair, smoking without relish one of his host's best cigars, watching with nervous impatience the closed door. Laura and Lenora were seated at the table, dressed for the street. They had the air of being prepared for some excursion. Quest, realizing the professor's high-strung state, had left him alone for a few moments and was studying a map of New York. The latter, however, was too ill at ease to keep silent for long.

"My friend French," he remarked, "gave you no clue, I suppose, as to the direction in which his investigations are leading him?"

Quest glanced up from the map. "None at all. I know, however, that the house in which Lenora here was confined is being watched closely."

The professor glanced across toward the table before which Lenora was seated. "It seems strange," he continued, "that the young lady should have so little to tell us about her incarceration."

Lenora shivered for a moment. "What could there be to tell," she asked, "except that it was all horrible, and that I felt things—felt dangers—which I couldn't describe."

The professor gave vent to an impatient little exclamation. "I am not speaking of fancies," he persisted. "You had food brought to you, for instance. Could you never see the hand which placed it inside your room? Could you hear nothing of the footsteps of the person who brought it? Could you not even surmise whether it were a man or a woman?"

Lenora answered him with an evident effort. She had barely, as yet, recovered from the shock of those awful hours.

"The persons who brought me the food," she said, "came at night. In the daytime, I never heard anything. The most I ever saw was once—I happened to be looking toward the door and saw a pair of hands—nothing more—setting down a tray. I shrieked and called out. I think that I almost fainted when I found courage enough to look, there was nothing there but the tray upon the floor."

"You never heard, for instance, the rustling of a gown or the sound of a footstep?" the professor asked. "You could not even say whether your jailer was man or woman?"

Lenora shook her head. "All that I ever heard was the opening of the door. All that I ever saw was that pair of hands. One night I fancied—but that must have been a dream."

"You fancied what?" the professor persisted. "That I saw a pair of eyes glaring at me?" Lenora replied, "eyes without any human body. I know that I ran round the room, calling out. When I dared to look again there was nothing there."

The professor sighed as he turned away. "It is evident, I am afraid," he said, "that Miss Lenora's evidence will help me no one. As to the other matter, Mr. Quest, does it not seem to you that her imprisonment was just a little purposeless? There seems to have been no attempt to harm her."

"Whoever took the risk of abducting her," Quest pointed out, grimly, "did it for a purpose. That purpose would probably have been developed in course of time. However, we know, Mr. Ashleigh, there was only one man who must have been anxious to get her out of the way, and that man was 'Cream'."

The professor's manner betrayed some excitement. "Then will you tell me this," he demanded. "The young lady is confident that she locked Craig up in the coach house and that the key was on the outside of the door, a fact which would prevent the lock from being picked from inside, even if such a thing were possible. The window is small, and up almost in the roof. Will you tell me how Craig escaped from the coach house in order to carry out this abduction?"

"A few minutes, mind, of his having been left there? Will you tell me that, Mr. Sanford Quest?" the professor asked, with a note of triumph in his tone.

"That's one of the troubles we are up against," Quest admitted. "We have to remember that the master criminal who planned the two murders here, that stole and restored Mrs. Rheinhold's jewels, that sends us those little billets-doux from time to time, is quite capable of finding a way out of a jury-built cage."

The professor sniffed. He turned once more to Lenora. "Young lady," he said, "I will ask you this. I do not wish to seem obstinate in my refusal to accept Craig's guilt as proved, but I would like to put this simple question to you. Did Craig's demeanor during your conversation seem to you to indicate the master criminal? Did he seem to you to be possessed of supreme courage, of marvelous intelligence?"

Lenora smiled very faintly. "I'm afraid," she replied, "that this time I'll have to satisfy the professor. He was white and trembling all the time. I thought him an arrant coward."

The professor smiled beautifully as he glanced around him. He had the air of one propounding an unsolvable problem. "You hear what Miss Lenora says? I ask you whether a man who even knew the meaning of the word fear could have carried out these ghastly crimes?"

"I have known cases," Quest observed, "where the most cold-blooded criminals in the world have been stricken with the most deadly fear when it has come to a question of any personal danger. However, he begged, 'Help me to get away from this house. You don't belong to the police. I'll give you every penny I have in the world to let me go.'"

make yourself comfortable in that chair and let us have your news. As you see, we have obeyed orders. We are all ready to follow you anywhere."

"It won't be the end of the world, anyway," the inspector remarked, as he lit his cigar. "I am going to propose a little excursion down Gayson Avenue way."

"Back to that house?" Lenora exclaimed with a grimace. "We have had those boys at the station," he went on, "and we have questioned the carter. It seems that after they had picked up the ball, a man came out of the side entrance of the house, saw them reading Miss Lenora's message, and shouted after them. The boys had sense enough to leave. The man ran after them but had to give it up. Here is their description of him."

The inspector took a piece of paper from his pocket. They all waited breathlessly. "Had to drag this out of the boys, bit by bit," the inspector proceeded, "but boiled down and put into reasonable language, this is what it comes to: A man of medium height, rather thin, pale, and after running a short distance he put his hand to his heart, as though out of breath. One of the boys thought his nose was a little oiled, and they both remarked upon the fact that although he shouted after them, he used no swear words but simply tried to induce them to stop. This description suggests anything to you, gentlemen?"

"All recollection as to its locality had escaped me," the professor continued sorrowfully. "I remember that it was on the anniversary of his having been with me for some fifteen years that I decided to show him some substantial mark of my appreciation. I knew that he was looking for a domicile for his father and mother, who are since both dead, and I requested a house agent to send me in a list of suitable residences. This, alas! was the one I purchased."

Quest glanced around the place. "I think," he said, "that the professor's statement now removes any doubt as to Craig's guilt. You are sure the house has been closely watched, inspector?"

"Since I received certain information," French replied, "I have had half a dozen of my best men in the vicinity. I can assure you that no one has entered or left it during the last twenty-four hours."

They made their way to the piazza steps and entered by the front door. The house was of an ordinary framework of moderate size, in poor repair, and showing signs of great neglect. The rooms were barely furnished and their first cursory search revealed no traces of habitation. There was still the broken skylight in the room which Lenora had occupied, and the bed upon which she had slept was still crumpled. French, who had been tapping the walls downstairs, called to them. They trooped down into the hall. The in-

pector was standing before what appeared to be an ordinary panel. "Look here," he said, standing out of the corner of his eye to be sure that Laura was there. "Let me show you what I have just discovered."

He felt with his thumb for a spring. In a moment or two a portion of the wall, about two feet in extent, slowly revolved, disclosing a small cupboard fitted with a telephone instrument.

"A telephone," the inspector remarked, pointing to it. "In an occupied house and a concealed cupboard. What do you think of that?"

"Don't ask me," he groaned. "French took the receiver from its rest and called up the exchange."

"Inspector French speaking," he announced. "Kindly tell me what is the number of the telephone from which I am speaking, and who is the subscriber?"

"Then if your men have maintained their search properly, that someone," Quest said slowly, "must be in the house at the present moment."

"Without a doubt," the inspector agreed. "I should like to suggest," he went on, "that the two young ladies wait for us now in the automobile. If this man turns out to be as degenerate as he has shown himself ingenious, there may be a little trouble."

They both protested vigorously. Quest shrugged his shoulders. "They must decide for themselves," he said. "Personally, I like Lenora, who has had less experience of such adventures, to grow accustomed to danger."

"With your permission, inspector, I am going to search the front room on the first floor before we do anything else. I think that if you wait here I will be able to show you something directly."

Quest ascended the stairs and entered a wholly unfurnished room on the left-hand side. He looked at a man who was crouching at a large but rather shallow cupboard, the door of which stood open, and tapped lightly with his forefinger upon the back part of it. Then he withdrew a few feet and drawing out his revolver, deliberately fired into the floor, a few inches inside. There was a half stifled cry. The false back suddenly swung open and a man rushed out. Quest's revolver covered him, but there was no necessity for its use. Craig, smothered with dust, his face white as a piece of marble, even his jaw shaking with fear, was wholly unarmed. He seemed, in fact, incapable of any form of resistance. He threw himself upon his knees before Quest.

"Save me," he begged. "Help me to get away from this house. You don't belong to the police. I'll give you every penny I have in the world to let me go."

"Get up," he ordered. "Very slowly Craig obeyed him. He was a pitiful-looking object, but a single look into Quest's face showed him the folly of any sort of appeal.

"Walk out of the room," Quest ordered, "in front of me—so! Now turn

to the right and go down the stairs." They all gave a little cry as they saw him appear, a trembling, pitiful creature, glancing around like a trapped animal. He commenced to descend the stairs, holding tightly to the banisters. Quest remained on the landing above, his revolver in his hand. French waited in the hall below, arms armed. Laura gripped Lenora's arm in excitement.

"They've got him now!" she exclaimed. "Got him, sure!"

On the fourth or fifth stair Craig hesitated. He suddenly saw the professor standing below. He gripped the banisters with one hand. The other he hung out in a threatening gesture. "You've given me away to these bloodhounds!" he cried—"you, for whom I have toiled and slaved, whom I have followed all over the world, whom I have served faithfully with the last breath of my body and the last drop of blood in my veins! You have brought them here—tracked me down! You!"

The professor shook his head sorrowfully. "Craig," he said, "you have been the best servant man ever had. If you are innocent of these crimes you can clear yourself. If you are guilty of a dog's death is none too good for you."

A scowl seemed to away for a moment upon his face. Only Lenora, from the hall, saw that he was fitting his right foot into what seemed to be a leather loop hanging from the banisters. Then

Quest and the inspector exchanged glances. "He's done us!" Quest muttered, "done us like a couple of greenhorns!" The inspector's rubicund countenance was white with fury. His head kept turning in the direction of Laura, to whom the professor was busy rendering first aid.

"If I never take another job on as long as I live," he declared, "I'll have that fellow before I'm through!"

CHAPTER XVII. The professor roused himself from what had apparently been a very gloomy reverie.

"Well," he announced, "I must go home. It has been very kind of you, Mr. Quest, to keep me here for so long."

"Don't hurry, Mr. Ashleigh," he said. "We may get some news at any moment. French has a dozen men out on the search, and he has promised to ring me up immediately he hears anything."

The professor sighed. "A man," he declared, "who for twenty years can deceive his master as utterly and completely as Craig has done me, who is capable of such diabolical outrages, and who, when captured escapes him in the face, is capable of a scare such as he made today, is

glances. "He's done us!" Quest muttered, "done us like a couple of greenhorns!" The inspector's rubicund countenance was white with fury. His head kept turning in the direction of Laura, to whom the professor was busy rendering first aid.

"If I never take another job on as long as I live," he declared, "I'll have that fellow before I'm through!"

CHAPTER XVII. The professor roused himself from what had apparently been a very gloomy reverie.

"Well," he announced, "I must go home. It has been very kind of you, Mr. Quest, to keep me here for so long."

"Don't hurry, Mr. Ashleigh," he said. "We may get some news at any moment. French has a dozen men out on the search, and he has promised to ring me up immediately he hears anything."

The professor sighed. "A man," he declared, "who for twenty years can deceive his master as utterly and completely as Craig has done me, who is capable of such diabolical outrages, and who, when captured escapes him in the face, is capable of a scare such as he made today, is

glances. "He's done us!" Quest muttered, "done us like a couple of greenhorns!" The inspector's rubicund countenance was white with fury. His head kept turning in the direction of Laura, to whom the professor was busy rendering first aid.

"If I never take another job on as long as I live," he declared, "I'll have that fellow before I'm through!"

CHAPTER XVII. The professor roused himself from what had apparently been a very gloomy reverie.

"Well," he announced, "I must go home. It has been very kind of you, Mr. Quest, to keep me here for so long."

"Don't hurry, Mr. Ashleigh," he said. "We may get some news at any moment. French has a dozen men out on the search, and he has promised to ring me up immediately he hears anything."

The professor sighed. "A man," he declared, "who for twenty years can deceive his master as utterly and completely as Craig has done me, who is capable of such diabolical outrages, and who, when captured escapes him in the face, is capable of a scare such as he made today, is

glances. "He's done us!" Quest muttered, "done us like a couple of greenhorns!" The inspector's rubicund countenance was white with fury. His head kept turning in the direction of Laura, to whom the professor was busy rendering first aid.

"If I never take another job on as long as I live," he declared, "I'll have that fellow before I'm through!"

CHAPTER XVII. The professor roused himself from what had apparently been a very gloomy reverie.

"Well," he announced, "I must go home. It has been very kind of you, Mr. Quest, to keep me here for so long."

"Don't hurry, Mr. Ashleigh," he said. "We may get some news at any moment. French has a dozen men out on the search, and he has promised to ring me up immediately he hears anything."

The professor sighed. "A man," he declared, "who for twenty years can deceive his master as utterly and completely as Craig has done me, who is capable of such diabolical outrages, and who, when captured escapes him in the face, is capable of a scare such as he made today, is

glances. "He's done us!" Quest muttered, "done us like a couple of greenhorns!" The inspector's rubicund countenance was white with fury. His head kept turning in the direction of Laura, to whom the professor was busy rendering first aid.

"If I never take another job on as long as I live," he declared, "I'll have that fellow before I'm through!"

CHAPTER XVII. The professor roused himself from what had apparently been a very gloomy reverie.

"Well," he announced, "I must go home. It has been very kind of you, Mr. Quest, to keep me here for so long."

motor truck—river pirates? And a lifebuoy! Wait."

He crossed the room toward his desk and returned with a flat in his hand. He ran his finger down it, stopped and glanced at the date.

"The Durham," he muttered, "cargo cotton, destination Southampton, sails at high tide on the 16th. Lenora, is that Calendar right?"

"It's the 16th, Mr. Quest," she answered. Quest crossed the room to the telephone.

"I want number one central," he said. "Thank you! Put me through to Mr. French's office. . . . Hello, French! I've got an idea. Can you come round here at once and bring an automobile? I want to get down to the docks—where the passenger steamer starts from—lower down. . . . Good! We'll wait."

Quest hung up the receiver. "See here, professor," he continued, "that fellow's a real dare-devil. He's just got our hands upon him, after all. Lenora, you'd better get along round to the hospital. You don't come in this time. It's hard enough to have Laura laid up—can't risk you. There'll be a little trouble, too, before we're through. I'm afraid."

Lenora sighed as she picked up her bag. "If it weren't for Laura," she said, "you'd find I'd pray hard to keep me away. I think that if I could see the handcuffs put on that man it would be the happiest moment of my life."

Quest replied, "It was the noblest men went after. The men looked like river thugs, although I wouldn't have thought of it if the professor hadn't used the words 'river pirates.' It's quite clear that they took Craig down to the river. There's only one likely ship sailing tonight, and that's the Durham. It's my belief Craig's on her."

The inspector glanced at the clock. "The man is a devil," he exclaimed, "he declared, 'and pretty quick, too. She'll be starting from somewhere about No. 25 dock, a long way down. Come along, gentlemen!'"

They hurried out to the automobile and started off for the docks. The latter part of the journey was accomplished under difficulties for the street was packed with dunes and heavy vehicles. They reached dock No. 25 at last, however, and hurried through the sled on to the wharf. There were no signs of a steamer there. Quest asked one of the carters who was just getting his team together.

The man pointed out to the middle of the river, where a small steamer was lying. "There she is," he replied. "She'll be off in a few minutes. You'll hear the sirens directly when they begin to move down."

Quest led the way quickly to the edge of the wharf. There was a small tug there, the crew of which were just making her fast for the night.

"Fifty dollars if you'll take us out to the Durham and catch her before she sails," Quest shouted to the man who seemed to be the captain. "What do you say?"

The man spat out a plug of tobacco from his mouth. "I'd take you to hell for \$50," he answered tersely. "Step in. We'll make it, if you look alippy."

They clambered down the iron ladder and jumped onto the deck of the tug. The captain, a stout, red-faced man, the men who formed the crew took off their coats and waistcoats.

"Where's the Durham?" the former ordered. "Now, then, here goes! We'll just miss the ferry."

They swung around and commenced their journey. Quest stood with his watch in his hand. They were getting up the anchor of the Durham and from higher up the river came the screams of steamers beginning to move on their outward way.

"TOO BAD—YOU'RE OLD"

With Your Hair You Would Look Ten Years Younger

How often we have heard this expression concerning a prematurely bald young-old man. It is absolutely unnecessary that any man should be subjected to such sympathy from his friends for there is a preparation on the market which, if used in time will remove all symptoms of falling hair, dandruff, and irritations of the scalp and promote the growth of the hair.

If you have been experimenting with preparations containing coconut oil or alkalis (if it foams it contains alkalis) throw them away at once! Go to O'Donnell's Drug Store, 904 F Street, and ask for a 50c bottle of Speiser's Scalp Tonic. Use it according to directions and in a reasonable time the most satisfactory results will be obtained. Remember, Mr. O'Donnell guarantees this preparation personally—if it fails, ask him for your money.—Adv.

Architects, Engineers, and Patent Attorneys need to become acquainted with our prices and work.

FRED A. SCHMIDT
719-21 13th St.
(Corridor Entrance).
We are at your service, Close 8 p. m.

REDUCED PRICES
On Anthracite Coal Now in Effect.
Prompt Deliveries.

J. Maury Dove Co., Inc.
PRINCIPAL OFFICE
12th and F Sts. N. W.
Phone Main 4270

LOANS
HORNING
RELEVE, VA. (south end of Highway Bridge). Free automobile from Rth and Rth Sts. N. W.



THE TRAP DOOR IS OPENED.

MRS. RHEINHOLDY IS OVERJOYED.

"We'll make it all right," the captain assured them. They were within a hundred yards of the Durham when Quest gave a little exclamation. From the other side of the steamer another tug shot out away, turning back toward New York. Huddled in the stern, half concealed in a tarpaulin, was a man in a plain black suit. Quest, with a little shout, recognized the man at the helm from his long brown beard.

"That's one of those fellows who was in the truck," he declared, "and that's Craig in the stern! We've got him this time! Say, captain, it's that tug I want. Never mind about the steamer. Catch it and I'll make it a hundred dollars!"

The man swung round the wheel, but he glanced at Quest at little doubtfully. "Say, what is this show?" he asked. Quest opened his coat and displayed his badge. He pointed to the inspector.

"Police job. This is Inspector French. I am Sanford Quest," the man replied. "What's the bloke wanted for?"

"Murder," Quest answered shortly. "That's so," the other remarked. "Well, you'll get him sure. He's looking pretty scared, too. You'd better keep your eyes open, though. I don't know how many men there are on board, but they're bound to have the toughest crew up the river. Got anything handy in the way of firearms?"

Quest nodded. "You don't need to worry," he said. "We've automatics here, but as long as we're heading them this way they'll know the game's up."

"We've got her!" the captain exclaimed. "There's the ferry and the first of the steamers coming down in the middle. They'll have to chuck it!"

Right ahead of them, blazing with lights, a huge ferry came churning the river up and sending waves in their direction. On the other side, unnaturally large, loomed up the great bows of an ocean-going steamer. The tug was swung round and they were alongside. The man with the beard leaned over.

"Say, what's your trouble?" he demanded. The inspector stepped forward. "I want that man you've got under the tarpaulin," he announced. "Say, you ain't the police?"

"I'm Inspector French from headquarters," was the curt reply. "The sooner you hand him over, the better for you."

"Do you hear that, O'Toole?" the other remarked, turning around. "Get up, you blackguard!"

"The man's under the tarpaulin, the officer," he was wearing Craig's clothes, but his face was the face of a stranger. As quick as lightning Quest swung round in his place.

"He's fooled us again!" he exclaimed. "Head her round, captain—back to Durham!"

The sailor shook his head. "We've lost our chance, guv'nor," he pointed out. "Look!"

Quest set his teeth and gripped the inspector's arm. The place where the Durham had been anchored was empty. Already, half a mile down the river, with a trail of light behind and her siren shrieking, the Durham was standing out seawards.

(Continued Next Sunday.)

LOCAL MENTION.
H. Bloch, 615 King St., Alexandria, invites you to try that most delicious of Washington candy—Perry Jones Chocolates.

The Sunday Evening Times is gaining rapidly in circulation and advertising patronage.
Chas. Chapin, Daily, Virginia, 608 S. St.

Phone Main 5260
And put your Want Ad in The Evening Times.

FRECKLES

Now is the Time to Get Rid of These "Freckles"
There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as the prescription ointment—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply a single ounce of ointment—double strength—from any drugist and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than an ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength ointment as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.—Adv.

BLUE PRINTING
This department will give you good service, low prices and quick delivery. Also try us on VANDYKES.

Architects, Engineers, and Patent Attorneys need to become acquainted with our prices and work.

FRED A. SCHMIDT
719-21 13th St.
(Corridor Entrance).
We are at your service, Close 8 p. m.

REDUCED PRICES
On Anthracite Coal Now in Effect.
Prompt Deliveries.

J. Maury Dove Co., Inc.
PRINCIPAL OFFICE
12th and F Sts. N. W.
Phone Main 4270